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News Release ~ Communiqué

Public review of direct-to-home satellite policy

OTTAWA, September 12, 1994 Canadian Heritage Minister Michel Dupuy and Industry Minister John Manley today announced their intention to undertake a public review of Government policy with respect to Direct-to-Home (DTH) Satellite distribution undertakings. The recent exemption order issued by the CRTC reflects existing policy which will be examined by means of full and open consultation with all interested parties.

The utilization and capability of satellite systems will have an impact on the evolution of the Canadian broadcasting system. They are also important components of the Information Highway.

Satellite services have the potential to ensure that Canadians, not otherwise served by cable or other carriers, have access to the content services and products provided for the Information Highway. They may also provide a cost-effective interconnection role where it is difficult to interconnect through land-based lines, potentially lowering costs to all users of the Highway.

The Ministers stated that a more thorough review of the role of satellite services, in particular with respect to the distribution of programming services to Canadians and in the context of the Government's policy on Canadian content and culture, is required.

A number of issues must be examined to develop new policy. These include:

1. The availability of DTH to all Canadians;

2. The availability of DTH services as competitors to existing distribution undertakings;

3. Identification of mechanisms and instruments which should be put in place to ensure fair and equitable access to Canadian programming services by competing distribution systems; and,

4. Analysis of the consequences of requiring the exclusive use of Canadian satellites for services made available in Canada; and,

5. How satellite distribution can best contribute to the distribution of Canadian programming, in Canada and abroad.

The Departments of Canadian Heritage and Industry intend to initiate a public process which will identify issues and pose questions to ensure there is complete, open and transparent consultation. In addition, The Advisory Council on the Information Highway will be providing advice on the new policy.

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